

Board of Trade Fakes

By Tony Edwards

The existence of these fakes has been known for some time. It was first fully disclosed by Capt. H. T. Jackson in the 1950's, and is extensively covered in the Society's Booklet "GB Official Perfins". All told sixteen different types of fake are known. It has often been a source of wonderment that people would go to the trouble of faking perfins. One reason, of course, is that it is easy to do. However the returns are not high as the perfin is usually worth less than the unperfined example. In this one area, however, the perfins command high prices. Officials, and particularly the Board of Trade perfins are listed in some catalogues and this inflates prices.

These fakes have appeared on the market again and at very high asking prices. Recently I have seen two instances of faked examples offered for sale by very reputable firms in London. There is no point in naming these firms as I do not doubt that they are completely innocent, but one was a top flight dealer and the other a well respected auctioneer.

The stamps offered for sale were two KEVII examples on piece. The piece seemed genuine enough being part of an OKMS cover from the Board of Trade addressed abroad and postmarked 1908. The date provides the clue as these stamps were withdrawn in 1904. Close examination of the postmarks tying the stamps to the piece showed that they had been removed, perfined and re-affixed. This item was on offer at £150. The second item was an auction lot containing a number of mostly mint stamps of Victoria and Edward VII all perfined "crown" /B.T. The lot was purchased for over £300 and after the purchaser had received them I was allowed to inspect them and all were fakes.

Collectors can look after themselves to some extent if they follow some elementary rules. All stamps which were not used after 1881 or which were introduced after 1904 must be fakes. Mint stamps are always suspect as are these without

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London postmarks. Of course those with dated marks outside the range 1881 to 1904 must also be fakes. The design must be identical to the published genuine one as there are no minor variations except the small hole type. An example of the genuine perfin is shown below. The small hole type is identical except for hole size. I have developed a series of further tests which I do not wish to publish, but I would be pleased to comment upon examples sent to me either from existing collections, or which may be offered for sale. This service is free to collectors

